/294 cont./

765 589 [302] 589 765 577 302

If it is a woman who is widowed, it is the law of the race that she must observe mourning for a period of one year, without it being permitted to shorten this period for any pretext whatsoever. After having wept for her departed husband for a whole day and after the burial is over, as has been said, she cuts off her hair and deposits it on the grave, where it remains for a long time, which I have not established exactly. This is the best offering that a widow can make to her late husband, and whether or not she loved him, it is a law which she must observe; otherwise she would incur the scorn of the people of the town, who would wonder at her conduct, she would lose her reputation, and the relatives of the deceased would resent it very much; they would take the children whom she loves so much away from her, and it would be hard for her to remarry.

765 589 [292]

As a sign of mourning, a loving widow, as well as one who is not, finds the dirtiest and most ragged piece of cloth that she has in the house and puts it on her head; she wears this during the entire period of her widowhood. One who arrives in a Chiriguano town for the first time will wonder about this piece of apparel and ask about its significance, because there is always some woman who is wearing mourning for her husband, her son, or her brother, if it is not for her father or mother. Finally, the widow is condemned to cry day and night for one long year, and one who does not cry as she should incurs the wrath of the relatives of the dead man. When I was a missionary in Santa Rosa, the cacique Yarituí died of nothing less than malignant smallpox. The widow cried for him so much and so loudly at the beginning that very soon she became hoarse. Nonetheless, the relatives complained of her actions, accusing her of little love (2).

2. The weeping during mourning is done by the woman four times a day, at sunrise, noon, sunset, and at some time around midnight. At this last hour it is very sad.

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If while asleep they sometimes dream of the dead one, very soon the widow, or whoever the dreamer is, gets up and makes a commotion, which lasts for several minutes. Also, when one

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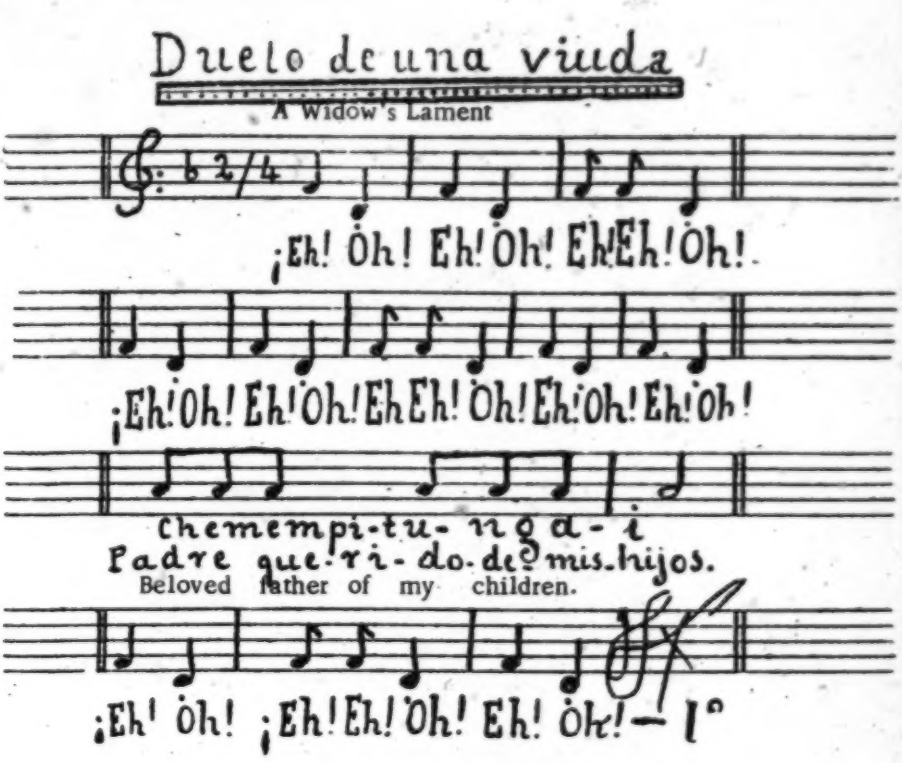
765 589 of the relatives comes from afar to the house of the departed, he does not greet anyone, but asks where the grave is, goes there, and, crouching down with his face toward the wall, cries for several minutes, and, when this is over, he then greets the living and the conversation begins in subdue tones.

589 765 539 [171] The song, as well as the way of weeping for the dead, is the same in all the tribes, but there are some small differences, as happens in the language itself.

Duelo de una viuda
A Widow's Lament
¡Eh! Oh! Eh! Oh! Eh! Eh! Oh!
¡Eh! Oh! Eh! Oh! Eh Eh! Oh! Eh! Oh! Eh! Oh!
Chemempi-tu- n g a- i
Padre que.ri-do.de?mis.hijos.
Beloved father of my children.
¡Eh! Oh! ¡Eh! Eh! Oh! Eh! Oh! — 1°

1. If the deceased is a grandchild, she says: Chinamanino ngai! Beloved grandchild! And if it is a son or daughter: Chemempi mi ngai! Beloved son or daughter!

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765 589 When the year of mourning ends, the widow continues her silence until one of the relatives of the deceased visits her with all respect as a person worthy of veneration, because she has wept much and with grief for the dead; he tells her that this is now enough, that she can go out and again appear at the public drinkings, since this visit takes place two or three days before some general drinking affair. The widow makes them ask her many times and once more reflects on the virtues /296/ and greatness of the husband she has lost through death; she curses the bad sorcerers and poisons, finally consenting to stop mourning, leave the house, and take part in the coming fiesta (1).

1. During the year of mourning the widows are continually cloistered in their homes, coming out only when they have to; they go to the spring for water and to the field for food.

[302] [301] [292] During the year the hair has grown out at least some 30 centimeters; she then removes the rag from her head, combs her hair carefully, puts the well-known cosmetic on her face and feet, adorns her neck and arms with necklaces and bracelets, dresses in her best tipoy, and goes out with some woman friend. In this first appearance she does not take part in the dancing or singing, so that all may know that she still feels the absence of her husband, and all respect her silence. Only afterwards does her public life begin anew, like the rest, that is, she sings and dances as before.

587 589 A few weeks later, if someone should ask her to be his wife, she will probably consent, if she is still young and has small children, because the reader can imagine the suffering of a widow, who must seek food for herself and her little ones. Oh, how often have silent tears run down my face on seeing the tears of widows and fatherless children who, for lack of food, not knowing whom to ask for aid, have come to the missionary or to one superior to them to ask for help! How could one deny it? Only a heart of bronze could have done so.

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